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SERMON

PREACH'D at the

ASSIZES

Held at

NORWICH,

AUGUST the Fourth, 1707.

By *HUGH JAMES*, M. A.
Rector of *Upwell* in *Norfolk*. K

Published at the Request of the Gentlemen of the Grand Jury.

L O N D O N :

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BEAUPRE BELL Esq;
High-Sheriff of the County of *Norfolk*,

A N D

To the Gentlemen of the Grand Jury, *viz.*

Sir *John Holland* Bart.
Sir *Roger Potts* Bart.
Sir *Edward Ward* Bart.
Horatio Walpole Esq;
Thornhagh Gordon Esq;
Erasmus Earle Esq;
Algernoon Potts Esq;
Philip Vincent Esq;

John Harvey Esq;
Cleare Garneys Esq;
Nich. Helwys, Esq;
Waller Bacon Esq;
Matthew Long Esq;
John Berney Esq;
John Burkin Esq;
Tho. Scott Esq;

Gentlemen,

BY the Publication of this Sermon, besides the Honour I have done myself, I hope, I shall find this further Satisfaction, that whatever Exceptions and Cavils were rais'd against it, when delivered from the Pulpit, will, when soberly and considerately Read, be found to have no other Grounds but what were owing to the Heat and Prejudice of Party, or, at best, to some unnecessary mistaken Jealousie. The Divine Right and Perogative of Sovereign Princes, is an Argument, we are too sensible, was never less Popular than now, but it is never the less True for that; and only shews the Ingratitude of those People so much the more, who can deny to the most deserving of Queens, and most renowned of Princes, what was so generally allowed to Her much less glorious Predecessors.

decessors. This was once a Principle upon which the old English Loyalty very highly valued it self both in Church and State: And'tis still a Principle we shall not be afraid to profess, as long as Her Majesty sits upon the British Throne, and Reigns by the successive Right of Her Ancestors. And whilst I am under the Protection and Patronage of so many Honourable Gentlemen; whilst I am pleading the Cause of Majesty under a most glorious flourishing Monarchy; whilst I am only asserting the Honour and Obedience due to the Queen and her Magistrates, and endeavouring to discharge the Duty of a good Subject of the Prince, and a faithful Minister of God, I have little Reason to fear the Censure or court the Favour of the World; nor shall I have in any consideration the little narrow Dissenting Politicks of a few malignant Spirits. The Doctrine and Principles I have here laid down, I have neither taken upon Trust or Invention, but have grounded them upon the Laws both of God and Nature, upon Reason and Scripture; and as long as I have these Testimonies on my side, I hope I shall never have occasion to be ashamed of what I have said in this Discourse, but rather to value my self upon the Honour you have done me, which I hope at least will be allowed to,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient

humble Servant,

Hugh James.

P R O V. 8. 15, 16.

By me Kings Reign and Princes decree Justice.

By me Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth.

TH E S E are the words of eternal Truth and Wisdom on the Part of God proceeding from the Mouth of *Solomon*, himself the most renowned of Kings, as well as the wisest of Men: One who knew as well to adorn the *Bench* as the *Throne*, and by his exquisite Wisdom both in Government and Judgment, was not only Crown'd with Glory and Honour among his own People, but drew upon him the just admiration of all the Neighbouring Nations and Princes around him.

It was in those Days a more usual thing for the Supreme Magistrate to preside in the Courts of Judicature, and to judge in Person between the Rights of his People. At least both in *Solomon's* time, and in the Ages before him, even in *Moses* himself, we are certain that the *Prince* and *Judge* were join'd in one Person, nay and sometimes the *Priest* too, as in *Eli* and *Samuel*, to show their near Affinity to one another, and the mutual inseparable Interest of all together. However to Reign and Decree Justice, to Judge and to Govern were then Synonymous Terms, and therefore we find in the sacred Annals of those extraordinary Princes, whom God from time to time rais'd up for the

Protection and Government of his People, it is not said that they Ruled or Governed, but that they *judged Israel* all the time of their Reign: And indeed there is not one thing wherein a Prince can more resemble the Majesty of Heaven, whose Vice-Gerent he is, than in that honourable Function of decreeing and distributing impartial Justice, the very Source and Center of all the Divine Perfections and Attributes of God. 'Tis true, when the Government of *Israel* was transfer'd from *Samuel*, to *Saul*, the Prince and the Judge seem'd then to be disjoin'd for a time, this latter Dignity remaining still in the old Prophet, but after the Death of *Samuel*, if it return'd not to *Saul*, yet it was again reunited in the Person of *David*, of whom it is recorded, that *He reign'd over all Israel, and executed Judgment and Justice among all his People*, 1 Chron. 18. 14. And so *David* himself, speaking of his High Court of Judicature at *Jerusalem*, where either he presided in Person, or some of his Sons representing him, said, it was *thither that the Tribes went up for Justice, for there was the Seat of Judgment, even the Seat of the House of David*, Psal. 122. 4, 5. But *David* was a Prince too much engaged in War, either at Home or abroad, to attend so much to this civil Duty as his Son *Solomon* might do after him, who Reign'd in a long uninterrupted Peace and Prosperity for many Years together in the former part of his Reign. In which time he built the most Glorious Temple of God, as the first auspicious Work of his Government, and which without doubt contributed not a little to that early course of Prosperity he enjoy'd thereupon. After this he finished a magnificent Palace for himself; in which he took a special care to set aside one part for his *High-Court* of Royal Justice, and made a *Porch* (or lofty Apartment) for the *Throne* where he might Judge, even the *Porch of Judgment*, as 'tis express'd 1 Kings 7. 7. Thus intent was this wise King upon those two glorious Ornaments of a Peaceful Reign in erecting the *House of God*, and the *Seat of Judgment*, in raising not only an everlasting Monument of his own Fame, but a per-

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perpetual Reverence in the Minds of the People for Piety and Equity, the two principal Pillars of a State, and in which alone an Earthly Monarch can most effectually please and serve the Majesty of Heaven, under whom he Reigns. Thus our *Royal Author*, effected by the Success and Prudence of his Councils, even more than his Father, tho' a mighty Warrior, could ever do by the Power of the Sword. He subdu'd even Kings and Kingdoms by the meer Reputation of his Wisdom, and the force of his Justice; *For they saw that the Wisdom of God was in him to do Judgment and Justice, and his fame was in all Nations round about*, as we read *1 Kings 3. 28. 4. 31.* and this it was that drew the *Queen of Sheba* to Honour him and her self with a Royal Visit, and made the rest of the Neighbouring Princes address to his profound Knowledge, and excellent Wisdom, as the renowned Oracle of the then Eastern World.

These were the Glories and Trophies of this Prince's prosperous Reign, till he came at last to forget the Power by which he Reign'd, to neglect to Honour the Majesty of Heaven, turn aside from the true Religion, and fall off from the God of his Fathers; to be involved by Evil Counsel in the Error of the neighbouring Nations, and to defile his Soul with the double Pollution of Lust and Idolatry at once. Then he who before for the Light and Lustre of his eminent Wisdom, and for the Fame of his unerring Judgment, was once *as an Angel of God* (as *Mephibosheth* said of his Father *David*) became a Soul overwhelm'd with Folly and Ignorance, despised of Men, and rejected of God; from a bright Star in Heaven he fell to be like a dark and wandering Planet, reduc'd to the very lowest Regions of a rational Creature; till the Countenance of God again shone upon him, enlightned his darken'd Understanding, and at length restored him, tho' with the forfeiture of the Crown of *Israel* to all his Posterity, to his ancient Wisdom and Knowledge, now improved as *Adam's* was, with the unhappy variety to know

Good and Evil, with the sorrowful experience of the folly and impotency of Human Nature, tho' never so high born and educated, and in whatsoever Station it is placed, without dependance on the direction and assistance of Heavenly Wisdom, and how frail and unfortunate the Councils of the Mightiest and Wisest Princes are, when deserting and deserted of their God: That God from whom alone it is, not only that they are Kings and Rulers of the People, but that they are good and just ones too. That God who hath taught us here by the Mouth of his Servant *Solomon*, who we find was himself fully instructed in the Truth both by Experience and Inspiration, that by Divine Direction and Influence *Kings Reign, and Princes decree Justice; By his Wisdom and Power Princes rule, Nobles and all the Judges of the Earth.*

From which Doctrine we shall beg leave to consider in general both the Authority and the end of Kingly Government, with the chief Duties both of Princes and People thereupon incumbent. And in order hereunto,

I. We shall examine the Divine Ordination or Authority of all Kings or Sovereign Princes from these Words of Gods Wisdom. *By me Kings Reign, Princes, Nobles, and all the Judges of the Earth;* The Magistrates of good Government, and Justice, however distinguish'd, or dignify'd.

II. From the Proof of this divine Ordination or Authority of the Sovereign Magistrate will naturally follow, both the Duty of the Prince and the People, which make up the chief end of Government; and these I shall next consider in their order, and so conclude.

1. Then let us consider the Divine Ordination and Authority of Sovereign Princes.

We shall not here enter upon that long and often labour'd Disquisition concerning the first rise of Kingly Government, whether it proceeded first from the Fathers, of Families, and the Patriarchs of Kindreds, obtaining at length by their Numbers, the Name of Nations; as
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when *Abraham* made War against Kings, and won Victories by the Strength alone of his own Family; or whether the jarring People, wherever they found a Man renown'd for Strength and Courage, from whom they might expect Protection, as from such as *Nimrod*, a mighty Hunter, and the first King we read of; or where they found a Man of Counsel, Justice and Gravity, as *Virgil* describes it, from whom they might expect an exact distribution of Right, and prudent Advice on all emergent Occasions, and so followed either the one or the other, on their own accord, yielding themselves voluntary Subjects to him, for the Benefit they expected from him; or desiring him to take the burthen of Government and Guardianship upon him, on condition of a strict Obedience to all his Injunctions, the most natural compact in all such Contracts, and without which even an Elective Kingdom is no rational Government: Or last of all, whether, when the World began to encrease, and the multiplication of Men introduced necessity of civil Society and Government, Heaven itself did not point out some Persons of Merit by its own providential Finger, and imperceptibly reconciled the People to unanimous consent and subjection to him; in which there was nothing either strange, or unnatural, for as Man is made a Rational Creature, so he is by consequence made a Sociable one too; and therefore whenever his Reason prevails above his Brutish Passions, he must naturally delight to live in regular Society, Order and Discipline, wheresoever he can meet with it. We will not spend time to enquire, or take upon us to decide which of these, or whether any other way was the most likely to be the first of Kingly Government: Nor will we enter upon that unnecessary Dispute, whether Monarchy be the most Antient or the most Excellent of all other Governments, since for the first we have Matter of Fact, both upon Divine and Humane Record; and for the last it is both Irrational and Prophan to contest it, since we have not only among the antient Sages the great-

greatest Masters of Reason, Law and Nature, to give Verdict for us, as to name no more *Aristotle, Plato, Lycurgus* and *Homer*: But even the Holy Scripture bears undoubted Evidence to the excellency of Kingly Government, both by Example and Precept; nay God himself is not only Universal Monarch of Heaven and Earth, but condescended both to be called and to act as a King of his People *Israel*. The two great Types of the *Messiah* were both of them Kings, *Melchisedek* and *David*, from whose Loins *Christ* himself descended, the peculiar *Anointed of the Lord*, whom Divine Revelation not only styles a King, but asserts him to be so in the highest Sense: Therefore we will pass over all the foregoing subjects of Dispute already overlabour'd by humane Arguments, which rather serve to unsettle, than secure the Minds of Men in good Principles of Obedience and Government, and we will come to prove the Divine Ordination and Authority of all Sovereign Princes, from the Testimony of Divine Law in the Sacred Records of God. And from hence we shall sufficiently learn, that whether Monarchy and Magistracy had its Foundation first from the Law of Nature or Nations; if there were then any real difference, or whether Kings and Kingdoms at any time arrive at their Dignity either by Acquisition or Inheritance, Adoption or Election; either by Consent, or Conquest of the People, they owe not only their Supreme Princely Authority, but even their Rise it self to that God who is the only true Fountain of all Power, Perfection and Honour, and disposes of Crowns and Scepters when, and to whom, he pleases. To the Eternal Majesty of Heaven therefore all Kings must refer their high Advancement here below, their Thrones of Grandeur and Seats of Judgment here on Earth, for *The Earth too is the Lords and the fulness thereof, the World and they that dwell therein*, if we will believe both a King and a Prophet of God, *Psal. 24. 1. The Lord God of Heaven hath given me all the Kingdoms of the Earth*, saith the mighty *Cyrus*, *Ezra 1. 2.* And in *Isaiah 45.*

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5, 6. God pronounceth on the very same occasion, *I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God besides me, I girded thee tho' thou hast not known me, that they may know from the rising of the Sun and from the West, that there is none besides me, I am the Lord and there is none else.* Thus speaks the Almighty in the advancement of the Emperor Cyrus, for the good of his Church, asserting herein, not only the Honour due unto his Name, but his supreme Sovereignty and universal Providence in the great Government of the World. Promotion cometh neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South, but God is the Judge, he putteth down one and setteth up another, saith the Royal Psalmist, himself a most eminent Instance of his own Proposition. And indeed if we allow God to be the Supreme Governour of the Universe, we can never doubt but his Almighty Providence is more immediately concern'd in the disposal of Crowns and Scepters, in the raising and authorizing his own especial Vice-gerents, who are to represent both his Person and his Power here below, to bear the Character of his Majesty to the People, and to govern immediately under him in a more sublime and visible manner: Therefore to look for any other Original of Royal Dignity, is highly to derogate from infinite Majesty; and to derive the Authority of Princes from any other Fountain but the Right, which the King of Kings has given them, is in effect to deny God to be Governour of the World, or that *the most High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will*, as the Prophet Dan. expressly asserts, and that even to the worst and basest of Men sometimes, for the severe Punishment of the Wicked, and the Scourge of the World: But in general his good Will and Purpose is to set Princes over the People for their greater Happiness and Honour, and so St. Paul says, that *They are the Ministers of God to us for good*, and God's desire is, that all Earthly Princes in Authority, Power and Wisdom, in Righteousness and Providence, in impartial Administration both of publick and private Justice, should resemble his own Heavenly Government

Dan. 4. 37.

Rom. 13. 4.

vernment as far as humane Abilities can possibly go. Therefore our Saviour in his Gospel, disdains not to resemble the Kingdom of Heaven *to a King* of this World, and for the same Reason the Eternal Majesty condescends to take *Their* Name, and communicate *his own* to these Earthly Princes, as if they were so many eminent Rays and visible Representatives of his Divine Sovereignty. And indeed both the Practice and Precept of the Divine Laws, both in the Old and the New, bear Testimony to this Sacred Truth. If we run through the whole History of the Jews, we shall find, that not only at first, but in all the changes and exigencies of State afterwards, their chief Leaders, Princes or Judges, were set over them by the visible hand of God alone, and therefore these Words are so often to be met with in the Book of *Judges*, *and the Lord rais'd them up a Deliverer or Saviour*, and after when the People desired a King, yet God did not suffer them to choose him, but appointed him himself, and anointed *Saul* to be their King, by the Hands of *Samuel* his own Priest and Prophet, so Jealous was he of his Honour. And in our Christian Kingdoms it has been the Usage for the Prince, at his Coronation, to receive his Ensigns of Royalty from the Hands of the Bishop, that the People may have no pretence of conferring Royalty, or claim any share in that Authority which is from God alone. Thus when the Kingdom of *Israel* was transferr'd from the House of *Saul* to *David*, He too was anointed their King by the Hands of *Samuel*, by the peculiar direction of God, even without the Knowledge of most of the People, and against the Will of the greatest part of *Israel*, who, either by Wilfulness or Ignorance, not distinguishing between the right of Inheritance in the Family of their former King, who had forfeited his Kingdom to God, not the People, and between the particular designation of God, for *David* to reign over them; espous'd the Interest of the House of *Saul* for seven Years against him, but God was greater than the People, and brought them over to *David* by his Providence, whom *David* himself could not reduce by his own Power, therefore he had reason to acknowledge,

ledge, *That the Kingdom was the Lords, and that he was the Governour amongst the Nations*, Pl. 22. 28. Nay, even Solomon his Son, who received his Kingdom by successive Inheritance, declar'd in a solemn Oath, *That the Lord had establisht him, and set him on the Throne of his Father David*, 2 Kings 2. 24. And because it may not be objected that God only exerted himself thus, among his own People, and set up Princes among them whom he design'd to be Judges, and Kings after his own Heart; we may learn both from the Prophet Daniel and the Prophet Jeremiah, that even Nebuchadnezzar, a Sacrilegious Tyrant, and a Beast of a King, yet held his Crown and Commission from the High God. Whether Princes be good or bad, Tyrants, or Fathers of their Country, God alone Ordains and Authorizes them in their Kingly Function, to the All-wise and diverse Purposes of his Divine Providence: And therefore the Apostle says expressly, *There is no Power but of God*, and a greater than either he, or Solomon, even Christ our Eternal King, gives an undeniable Sanction to the Truth, when he tells Pontius Pilate his own unjust Judge, who boasted of his Power of Life and Death over him, *That He could have no Power at all against him, except it had been given him from above*, John 19. 11. The Eternal Word of Truth, could utter nothing but what was highly pregnant both with Truth and Reason, for how indeed could Pilate have Power of Life over the Lord of Life himself, except from Above, since 'tis a known verity both in Reason and Religion, that no Man has power over his own Life; much less can he have it over the Life of another, and least of all, can any Man give to another, what he hath not of himself. The Right of Life is in him alone that gave it, even God, the Almighty Authro of our Being, and the Lord of Life and Death, and all things thereunto belonging. He alone can invest the Prince, or supreme Magistrate, with this High Power, which is the most essential part of his Authority,

ty, and the Prince possess of this Right from God, who alone could give it, has the only Power amongst Men to delegate it to others. This is one inseparable Prerogative of the Supreme Magistrate, which 'tis impossible to be given him by any mortal Power; and therefore an irrefragable Argument, that the Right of Government in Princes can never be derived from any Right or Power of the People, however Industrious some of late have been to propagate this popular Opinion, not only so destructive to Monarchy in general, but highly derogatory to Heavenly Majesty; nay, and have publish'd such pernicious Tenets concerning this chymical Power of the Multitude, as tend to the Dethroning even of God himself; and yet are the Authors of these Absurd, Atheistical, Blasphemous Notions, not only suffered in a Christian Nation, but caress'd and admir'd by a Party of Men, who make such a perpetual noise about the Purity and Truth of Religion. Good God! to what a pitch of Infidelity and audacious Hypocrisie are we grown, either of them enough to sink a Nation to Ruin. Is not this to *use their Christian Liberty for a Cloak of Maliciousness*? From having leave to follow their private Opinions to turn publick Incendiaries? Is not this to abuse the Mercy, and defy the Justice of the Government in the utmost degree? Not only to murmur against *Moses* and *Aaron* at once, but to make an attempt to Unthrone God himself, to strike at the Root of *Religion* and *Monarchy* in the highest Resort; to give the People a Right to be their own Priest, and their own King, and their own God too, when they please; a popular soothing Argument that they were sure would never fail of Success and Applause amongst Men of loose Minds, and the mad malevolent Multitude.

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That there are what we term Elective Monarchies is true, but this gives the People no Power of Regal Ordination, but only a Right of Presentation of the Prince to God; who besides, that he conciliates the Consent of the People, to the Person he designs to set over them; instructs their Understanding, and directs their Choice for his own wise Purposes: Besides, that he brings these things about by his secret Influence, for the ends of his Providence, sometimes for the Prosperity, sometimes for the Punishment of the People; He at last must apply the Power and Authority of his Regal Office, for none else can do it: He must give the Commission by which the Prince Elected, must act as a Sovereign, and execute Justice on his Subjects. 'Tis also a most false delusion, that the People imagine they have a Power reserv'd to pull down whomsoever they set up: For tho' they set God aside in the Argument, as they easily can do; yet, by their own Consent, and free Choice, they have made themselves subject to the Prince whom they have Elected their ruling Superiour; and therefore to say, he again can be subject to them, runs the Argument into an infinite Circle, and sufficiently exposeth the Absurdity of it, *For the Servant is not greater than his Lord, says our Saviour, nor is he that is sent, greater than he that sent him, St. John 13. 16.* Now if the King be the *Lord*, and the People the *Servants*, then he can never be inferiour or accountable to them, for that's against the Law of Nature: and if the People be the *Servants*, and the Prince the *Lord*, then it was not their Power that made him, for the *Greater* cannot be *sent by the Less*, that's against the Law of Reason; but if the reverse must be granted, then the People are the *Lords* of the Prince, and he their Subject or *Servant*, *Less*, both in Power and Dignity, than the lowest of the Multitude, which no Man of Sense can allow. And without all Controversy, every one is subject to a greater,

not to a less than himself; therefore no Sovereign Prince can have any Power superiour to himself, in his own Dominions, besides the Majesty of Heaven, by whom, and for whom he governs, and whose Representative he is to the People, as he is the Peoples Representative to God, but not to any inferiour Power, for that destroys the Constitution by which he Reigns, and confounds even Reason it self. And indeed both in this Nation and others, nay, and in most or all of these Western Kingdoms, which are said to have most of the nature of what we call mixt Government, we do not find that their first Princes, either owed or acknowledged any Right of Dominion from the People; and if we look into History, whether Antient or Modern, we shall find, that all the Heroes and Worthies that constituted new Empires, were visibly rais'd by the Hand of God; which shews, besides their Divine Authority, that Monarchy was the most approved of Heaven, above all other Governments in the Earth. But we are not about to contend for the Excellency of Kingly Government, it were needless, we presume, in this *Audience*, and out of our Sphere, before that *Honourable Profession*, with whom the Sacred Rights of Empire, are entrusted, whose Business and peculiar Honour it is to be the civil Guardians of our State, as by Law established, and whoever of that *Robe* acts otherwise, we need not tell him, he may learn it almost in every line of the Law he reads, that he acts directly contrary both to his *Interest* and *Duty*. All I desire is, only to assert the Truth of God's Word, and all I design by it, is only to create a more dutiful Regard to the Magistrate, and to persuade a Religious Obedience to our lawful Superiours, not only for *Wrath*, but for *Conscience sake*; to strike a just Awe and Reverence upon the Minds of the People, for Sacred Majesty now sitting before us by *these venerable Representatives* of our

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Gracious Sovereign in the most solemn Act of her Royalty.

We come now to the second Part of our Discourse, viz. To consider that great Duty both of the Prince and the People, which naturally ariseth from the Divine Ordination and Authority of Kings, and makes up the chief end of Government.

1. then, We will consider the Duty of the Prince : Which is the faithful Decision and Execution of Justice, both Civil and Religious, and that both by the example, and for the sake of God, under whom they Reign— *By me Princes decree Justice, and for me too*, as it was spoken by a good King, *2 Chron. 19. 6. Ye judge not for Man, but for the Lord said he, who is with you in the Judgment.* The Majesty of God goes along with the Person of the Magistrate. Indeed the decreeing of Justice is so essential to the Duty of the supreme Magistrate, that not only here, but in many other Places of Scripture, *doing Justice and Judgment*, is the same thing as Governing or Government. And therefore, *Solomon* confesseth, *that the Throne is establish'd by Righteousness*, *Prov. 6. 12, 25, 5.* The King, under God, is the only Fountain of Justice, the Soul and Life of the Law, the living Law of the Kingdom : and indeed the only Law by which the first Governments and Monarchies were ruled, resided in the Lips of the Prince his Mouth was the Oracle of Justice to the People, and his Throne the Seat of their Judgment. But seeing that Kings were but Men, and subject to the Errors of Judgment and Biass of Affections and Passions, as well as others : Therefore wise Princes, who studied the good of their People more than the gratifying their own Wilfulness or Ambition, caused certain Rules and Laws to be enacted, to direct and oblige both themselves and Posterity to a more constant and exact Administration of Government ; and for that Reason they took to themselves Counsellors, Assistants in Government, not
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Equals ;and ordain'd subordinate Magistrates for the ease of the Supreme, and for the more circumstantial and exact distribution of Justice. Thus, when the Lord perceiv'd *that Moses could not bear the Burthen of the People alone without wearing away*, he order'd him to choose 70 Counsellors to bear the Burthen of the People with him, and to be vicarious Magistrates or Judges over them *Numb. 11.* And to these Counsellors, or Magistrates of State, God imparted of the Spirit of *Moses* their Prince at the Door of the Tabernacle, that neither they, nor any of the People after them, might have any pretence of assuming this Power to themselves, so careful was the Divine Wisdom not to leave any President of ordaining inferior Magistrates by the Hand of the Populace. Thus we see the Rise and Commission, both of the Supreme and Subordinate Minister of Justice. Every supreme Magistrate, as *Moses* was, is invested from God with a Power of Judicature; and according to the Model that God has left him in this Example of *Moses*, he may delegate of that Power to others; *impart of his Spirit* to those Counsellors or Judges he shall choose to bear the Burthen of the People with him. And even this delegated Power is so sacred, and of such esteem in the Eyes of God, that subordinate Magistrates, as well as the supreme, are sometimes stil'd *Gods* in Scripture, because in their Justiciary Office they sustain the Person of God, as well as their Prince in whose stead they act, and whose Cause is the same as God's, and whose Ends like his, are ever the best served by the most unerring Justice. For 'tis only a loose Anti-Government Notion, to think that exact Justice and true Policy can have any Antipathy, or ever interfere with one another. For true Polity of State is contain'd within the Laws thereof, as the Spirits of Life within the Nerves of the Body Natural; cut off or weaken these, and the other fly out into Air, and evaporate to nothing.

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Thus, I say, the Body Politick is like a languid lifeless Lump, a dead Carcass, without the vigorous execution of the Laws, and a due circulation of Justice. Therefore since the Life and Well-being of every Government is wrapt up in the Laws of the State, 'tis no doubt the peculiar Province and Interest of the Prince, to take Care they be faithfully Executed, and jealously preserv'd in their full Force and Authority. And so it is the Duty of the Magistrate, not only to perform vigorous Justice thereby, that the Strength of them may not be relaxed, nor the Awe of them lost in the Minds of the People; but at all times, without any Byass of Circumstances, or Persons to expound and enforce them in such a constant coherent Sense, as that they may not seem to clash either with themselves, or one another, or contradict the first just Intent of the Law-Giver; least the Force of the Executive, and the Credit of the Legislative Power be both of them weaken'd thereby. The Rule of Law and good Government ought to be as unbyass'd, unalterable, certain and steady, as the nature of Equity it self. Otherwise it unhinges and loosens the Principles of Obedience in the subject, distracts their Notions of Justice; discourageth the performance and unbends the Sense of their Duty. When once People begin to think they are uncertain of the Rule they are to walk by, they have a ready excuse to walk by none at all. And as there is a great Duty incumbent on the Magistrate, to expound and enforce the Laws for the publick welfare and preservation of the State in such a constant Method and Tenor, as to keep up the Regard and Reverence of Government thereby (since nothing more endangers the Safety, or destroys the Credit thereof, than frequent alterations or remissions of Laws) So there is no less a Duty incumbent in the faithful decision of Right, the decreeing of private Equity between Man and Man.

Cursed

Cursed be he that removeth his Neighbours Land-Mark, saith the Scripture, shall he be less accursed that fixeth it there by a perpetual Sentence of Injustice? this corrupteth Justice in the Fountain Head, saith a Learned Noble Lawyer of our Nation, and therefore our Royal Judge Solomon saith, that *A Righteous Man falling down, (or failing of his Right) before the Wicked, is as a troubled Fountain and a corrupt Spring,* Prov. 25. 26. But as the Laws of this Land are constituted and administred, the Judge on the Bench, has ever the least share in a corrupt Sentence, and for the most part none at all; the Evidence, the Advocates, the Juries, all contribute to it, and God knows how often they are guilty of it; without the least Regret either for the Injustice they have done unto their Neighbours; or the Curse they have drawn upon themselves.

These are the chief Branches of the Magistrates Duty in civil Concerns, but there is a *Religious* one too, which he is as highly bound to take Care of, nay and the greater Charge of the two, not only by the Tyes of Gratitude and Interest, from his Divine Ordination, but by greater Obligations from the nature of the Charge it self; Obligations infinitely greater than can arise from any civil Concern, forasmuch as the Honour of the Creator transcends the highest good of the Creature, forasmuch as the publick Advancement of God's Glory supercedes all other, both Advantages and Glories of the State; and the eternal Good of Mens Souls is more to be desired than any Temporal Welfare of the People, either private or publick, and Dearer unto us even than Life it self, how dear soever that be: For if we fail in this, all is lost that a great and gracious Soul can consider worth the living in this World. *The loving Kindness of the Lord is better than Life it self,* said David, how much more then than all other inferiour Concerns, and accidental Advan-
tages

tages thereof. Now can there be any Work, any Consideration that more redounds to the true Interest and renown of a Nation, that more becomes the Dignity and Duty of a Magistrate, than the Honour of God and eternal Felicity of Man. This is the only End of our living under Laws and Discipline in this World, to this end they ought all to be subservient, for if Men propose any other, they miserably mistake their Point, and besides the loss of this, will even fail of those Ends they propose. We ought to look upon all human Laws and human Government, as a principal part of God's Providence, whereby he draws and governs the World to his own Holy purposes, that Men may be made both good here, and hereafter happy thereby. The Political End of human Government, is providing for the temporal Safety of Societies, maintaining Right, encouraging Industry, and establishing common Security: But still God has a much greater End to serve, and that is, the laying the true Foundation of Mens future Welfare, and eternal Safety, by Laws of Religion and Virtue. The first Eye and the last Aim of the Ruling or Judging Power must always look this way. For whoever prefers any other Politick or Temporal Concern to this, how plausible soever he makes himself thereby, his *Praise is not of God, but of Man*, and at his Hands he must look for his Reward.

But besides this indispensable obligation of his Duty, a Governour is under all the Ties, both of Gratitude and Interest, to take care of the Honour of God and Religion. And first he is oblig'd to it in Point of Gratitude from his Divine Ordination. For how can he more justly imploy his Power than for his sake, and in his Cause, from whom he holds his Commission. As God makes Princes to rule over the rest of Mankind, so they in return ought to assert his Supremacy over all Causes and Persons.

As he has advanced their Temporal Honour, so they ought to promote his Spiritual Glory. If God subdues the People to the Prince, the Prince should subdue the People unto God, by keeping up not only the Truth and Sincerity, but the Credit and the Discipline, the Awe and Port of Religion. This they ought to do,

2. Upon point of Interest, if for no other Reason; lest God should suffer Men to be as bold with their Rulers, as they have suffer'd the People to be bold with their God. God cannot Reign in that Government which does not assert him above all things; and where God does not Reign, the Magistrate has lost the strongest Tye of Subjection. For they who have laid aside the Fear of God, and the Care of their future Happiness, what have they else to value but gratifying their Lusts in this Life by what means soever they can do it. They that fear not God, will never fear Man any longer than they can set themselves loose from his Power by the shortest way they are able. Therefore when Religion grows mean and contemptible in the Minds of the People, no wonder they grow Rude and Sawcy with the Government: they that regard not to Blaspheme the most high God, will soon let their Tongues loose against Earthly Majesty, and their Hands too when Opportunity offers. The Religion of the Subject and a well-informed Conscience, is the only Security of the State, the only Bonds of publick Tranquility. In short, the Care of Religion is so necessary for the Good of the Publick, that there can be no Government, no Peace, no Security, no Prosperity without it. One of the greatest Lawyers and greatest States-Men that ever the World produced, the *Roman Tully*, said, *It was the only Wisdom of their State*: and so no doubt it is in every other State, though we should have

have nothing but Temporal Advantages to reap from it, which was all those Heathens expected.

And hence it is that even *Atheistical* Politicks, even *Machiavel* himself can advise his Prince to encourage and cultivate Religion and Piety, as the surest tie upon the Hearts of the Subjects, how little soever they were bound by it themselves. And now if the Appearance only of Religion, could produce such a Blessing in a State, what might it do when practiced both by Prince and People, in its native Simplicity, and in its genuine Truth, and Lustre. But whatever Blessings we of this Kingdom enjoy in the *one*, we have little to boast of in the other.

I come in the last place to consider the Duty of the People to their Prince, the Obedience of the Subject to the Sovereign. This becomes due, not only from the Divine Ordination of Kings, and the Divine end unto which they are ordain'd, not only from the high Dignity and Duty of their Calling, but from the plain consideration of the nature and obligation of those Laws by which they are to govern. The most of the Cases that fall under the cognizance of a Judging Ruler, or Civil Magistrate, are of a mere moral Concern and Nature; as of Truth and Equity, the providing for, and maintaining of publick or private Right, the encouragement of Virtue and Goodness, the restraint of Immorality and Wickedness in all the Degrees of Men, without any respect of Persons. Now in the Execution of all these Laws, and the exercise of Justice hereupon, we have not the least pretence of Disobeying the Magistrate, because all humane Ordinances of this kind are only a Transcript of Divine Righteousness, a Repetition of the Laws both of God and Nature; which we are indispensibly oblig'd to observe, though no Humane Authority had ever enacted or enjoin'd them. There are indeed other Matters of Subjection and Obedience,

which are of a pure positive Right, such things as are of their own Nature wholly Indifferent, but when once commanded by Lawful Authority, we are as much oblig'd in Conscience to obey them, as any other Matters of the Moral Law. Because the first Principle and Foundation of Morality, is Obedience to our Lawful Superiours; and therefore 'tis made the first Commandment of the second Table of God's Laws, which contains the chief Heads of the Moral Law, and enjoins indispenfible Obedience thereunto. Nor can any one hereby be so far mistaken, as to imagine that the Magistrate can enjoin a natural Evil, or change it into Good by any positive Law; but only in those things which are neither Good nor Evil in their own Nature, there the Magistrate has a Power of enjoining Obedience, and making that which was no Evil in it self, a real and Sinful Evil by Disobedience. Therefore *for conscience sake*, we are oblig'd strictly to obey the Commands of the Lawful Magistrate in all things that are not known and certain Evils; for it is not a doubtful Evil will excuse us. In a dubious Case it is ever safest going on the side of Authority, which we may very well think wiser than our selves, if we be not over-run with Self-conceit and Sufficiency.

Our Obedience to God is not tried by those Governours or Governments which most please us, but by those which God has placed over us, whether they please us or no. Nor is it by any inequality of Nature, that one Man has the Power of commanding Obedience from another, be they never so Rich or Potent, Good or Virtuous, but it proceeds from the Right of Subjection and Sovereignty that God has over us all; and on whomsoever he is pleased to confer this power of Government, to stamp this Sovereign Authority of his; they from thence-forth become his proper Vice-gerents,

gerents, and immediate Ministers of his Justice here amongst Men, and to disobey or contest their Commands, or the Laws by which they govern, to dispute their Power, or resist their Person, is of the same sinful Nature, as if we did the same thing against God himself, and Rebellion to the Majesty of Heaven. Therefore St. Paul runs the Argument through an unerring Chain of Divine Right and Reason, when he exhorts, *That every Soul be subject unto the higher Powers, for there is no Power but of God, whosoever therefore resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God, and shall receive to themselves Damnation*, Rom. 13. Therefore let 'em look to it, who resist the Ordinances of lawful Authority; for unless they have more than ordinary Reason for it, *Damnation* is due to their Disobedience. But we must not only be *subject for Wrath, but for Conscience sake*, says he, so far should we be from making Conscience a pretext of Disobedience, as is done in these times: not out of a servile fear must we be subject, but out of a conscientious Compliance to that Authority which we know to be given by God to the Magistrate; if he use that Authority ill, it is his fault: whether he perform or fail in his Duty, Obedience is ours; and therefore another Apostle says, *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of Man, for the Lord's sake; when at that time, most of the Men of those Ordinances, were Tyrants, Infidels, and profess'd Enemies to the Christian Faith; but that was not the business; they were placed there by God, and therefore all good Christians were to submit to their Ordinances for the Lord's sake, whether it were to the King, as Supreme, or unto Governours, as unto them that are sent by him for the praise of them that do well, and the Punishment of Evil Doers.* This brings the thing home to our present Purpose; for, as St. Paul saith, *Rulers are not a terror to good Works, but to the Evil*, that's the truth of the Business; there are no People set themselves so much

against

against the Power and Perogative of Princes, and endeavour to subvert the force of our Laws, as they who have an Evil Conscience, and either are, or want to be licentious ; and therefore it is seldom known that any Persons raise disturbance in a Government, who have not made themselves obnoxious to the Justice thereof before-hand. True Christian Principles cut off the Root of all Sedition, and seldom any one is engaged in this, before he has made Shipwreck of the other. St. Peter and St. Jude, both bear witness, that *they who despise Governments, and speak evil of Dignities, are chiefly such as walk in the Lusts of their own Uncleanness*: and no wonder such Persons set themselves against that Authority, which is a Terror to *Evil Doers*: no wonder they proclaim War and Enmity to all good Government and Discipline, which puts a restraint on those Lusts they have a mind to walk in; and are industrious to reduce any Power to be weak and precarious, from which they some time or other dread a Punishment for their Wickedness. This was the bitter Root of that *calamitous fatal Rebellion* which God suffer'd once to fall upon us for the Punishment of our Sins; any one but moderately read in those Times and Histories, may easily discern, that this was the secret Cause of Discontent, and that the Persons at the bottom of this wicked Secret, whatever fine Patriots they then appear'd, were a Set of the most Atheistical, inward Debauchees (had they been well known) that the whole Nation could produce; which their Practice sufficiently proved when once they had got above that Authority to which they were before obnoxious; had overturn'd that Power of Justice they dreaded for their Evil Actions, and their *Lusts of Uncleanness*, were now become Licentious and Lawless. God grant we may never fall into the Hands of such Persons again; but it is our Concern at all times to be aware of their Principles, and

and perhaps more our Concern at present than every one imagines, for even in those Times these Principles had neither more Votaries, nor greater than they have now; nor were they ever so boldly avow'd, and so publickly and shamelessly profess'd; The Principles I mean, which generally go together, of Atheism, Libertinism, and Tumultuous Popular Government; that Republican Imposture which is ever bewitching the People with false, tho' pleasing, Notions of unlawful Liberty, which levels and exposeth the Authority of the Prince to the Caprice of the Mad Multitude; which sets the Minds of Men loose to the Laws, both Religious and Civil, by preferring their Wealth and Riches, their Trade and their Traffick, to all good Order and Discipline, to all the most honourable Engagements of Justice, Virtue, and Piety, ever Postponing the Honour of God and Religion, and the eternal Good of Mens Souls, to the paltry Gain of this World, which is no small branch of *Idolatry*. This, in short, is that *Hydra* of Faction, that Serpent of Sedition, which of late Ages has so Poyson'd the very Vitals, Corrupted the Noblest Blood, Blasted the Constitution, and reduc'd the true Strength of this otherwise renowned Kingdom; and upon all Occasions, is still propagating Plagues to Posterity, and laying the mischievous Scenes of our future Misery, however secure we are now in our present Prosperity, under the visible Favour of Heaven, and Protection of a Princess, whose natural Goodness and Equity, Virtue and Piety, has set her above the reach of the widest Malice and the boldest Iniquity. But if in this Prosperous Triumphant Reign, when besides it has been the principal Care of the Government to cut short all Excuse and Occasion of Disturbance; if even now when Sedition might be both asham'd and afraid to show its Face, and when Faction hath nothing to find fault with; If still these popular, licentious, turbulent Spirits,

rits dare so openly avow, and espouse their pernicious Principles, tending so directly to downright Confusion and Anarchy : What would they have done, if God had been pleased to reverse our Case, and had punish'd the Prince with a course of ill Fortune for the Sins of the Nation ? And what still may they not do, in another Age, whenever God shall permit these Blessings to pass over our Heads ? These Blessings he now so largely indulgeth us in, because perhaps the last : When he shall cause this Sun-shine of Glory to set in our Horizon, for our severer Punishment in the end, and at length, tho' late, shall suffer the Felicity and Light of *Israel* to be at once extinguished from amongst us ; which God Almighty long avert, in his infinite Mercy, since we have nothing to plead for by Merit. And *Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that the course of this World may be so peaceably order'd by thy Governance, that thy Church may joyfully serve thee in all Godly Quietness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*



F I N I S.

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